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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

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20 May 1983

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: Graham Fuller  
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SUBJECT: Monthly Warning Meeting - May 1983

1. Lebanon: Prospects for Syrian-Israeli Conflict

A recapitulation of warning indicators points up a series of Syrian actions over recent months that can be interpreted as preparations for an upcoming conflict with Israel. Most of these movements occurred in late April and early May and, although the level of tension is higher than normal, recent weeks have witnessed a relatively static situation.

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Analysts, while noting that either an isolated incident or an attempt by one side to test the other's mettle (perhaps in the form of an air clash) could readily escalate into a serious conflict, do not see evidence that either party intends to initiate hostilities in the very near term. Less certainty was expressed with regard to somewhat longer term possibilities (3-6 months from now) when Syria, in particular, might view

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itself in a better position after completion of ongoing military reorganization and upgrading to extract a measure of success from a conflict with Israel.

Possible additional indicators that hostilities are imminent could include:

- a heightened level of Syrian troop preparedness;
- Syrian troops no longer returning home at night; and
- Israeli moves indicating that they are ready to preempt or respond to Syrian moves.

With regard to the recently concluded Lebanese-Israeli agreement for withdrawal of foreign forces: While Syrian rhetoric against the agreement has been at a very high pitch, Damascus has taken no actions thus far to disrupt the agreement. Analysts believe the most likely Syrian course of action will be "middle road" -- that is, Damascus will not attempt to foment full scale civil war nor acquiesce to the agreement, but more likely will pressure Beirut in an effort to extract concessions.

PLO Reinfiltration:

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[REDACTED] The Intelligence Community estimated a total PLO presence in Lebanon of approximately 13,000 last November and current numbers probably remain very close to that level. Arafat's presence in the Bekaa in recent days was related to his attempt to assure his continuing control over the PLO following reported mutinies by some PLO factions.

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## 2. Iran-USSR: Implications of Crackdown on Tudeh

Analysts doubt that the clerics' crackdown on the Tudeh will provoke a fundamental rupture in Soviet-Iranian ties even if the party

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leadership is put on trial and executed, as seems likely. Both Moscow and Tehran prefer not to let the deterioration in relations get out of hand and the Soviets seem prepared to let their communist colleagues pass away. Nonetheless, sharp Soviet rhetoric is likely once trials begin and some symbolic retaliatory measures are possible.

As for the Iran-Iraq war, the GCC initiative is the key current development. As long as the GCC initiative is underway, serious and effective Iraqi attacks on Iran's major oil export facility at Kharg Island seem unlikely. The ongoing Iraqi attacks on smaller Iranian facilities are not sustained enough to provoke Iranian retaliation on the other Gulf producers. Should Iraq decide to step up its economic warfare, a key indicator would be increased Iraqi pilot training for bombing missions.

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### 3. Afghanistan: Implications of Soviet Negotiations with Insurgents

While it is too early to assess the relative gains or losses accruing to the Soviets from their policy of actively negotiating truces with insurgent groups, the short term probably has been positive for Moscow. Various groups have been removed, at least temporarily, from the anti-Soviet/Afghan government equation, permitting some Soviet and Afghan troops to carry on their operations in other areas. Moreover, those groups opting for "peace" may discover the benefits of their new status and permanently give up the battle, particularly if the Soviets are smart enough not to aggressively impose their will in those areas where the insurgents have been effectively neutralized.

Nevertheless, we do not know how extensive the talks are -- that is, how many groups may be involved and how much territory they occupy -- or how long the truces will last. Moreover, those insurgents willing to negotiate may be doing so as a tactical ploy to give them time to build up their arsenals and to bring themselves to a higher state of readiness. There is, in fact, some evidence that Panjsher Valley insurgent leader Masood may be doing just that and that the valley may well be harder for the Soviets to crack once such a buildup has occurred.

It should be noted that Soviet pursuit of negotiated truces with the insurgents is part of an overall strategy that will continue to include military pressure against those insurgents still operating against them, continuing buildup of the Afghan government and military, and a parallel track of appearing to be interested in participating in the Geneva negotiations.

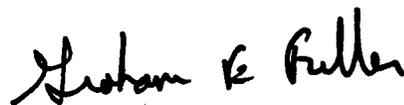
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#### 4. YAR-PDRY: Border Tensions

Recent PDRY troop deployments along the border are fairly small and probably do not indicate an imminent border war. More likely Aden is responding to YAR military moves to eliminate remaining NDF enclaves. Sanaa probably wants to depict the situation as dangerous primarily to discourage Saudi Arabia, Algeria and other Arab states from providing more aid to Aden.

In a broader sense it is too soon to say whether recent developments suggest Aden is backing away from the trend toward moderation that has been the hallmark of South Yemeni politics over the last year. On the whole, analysts suspect Aden still wants to avoid serious tensions on either the YAR or Omani border in order to elicit GCC aid. North Yemen seems to be prime mover in raising recent tensions, not Aden. Small border incidents remain possible.

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